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Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

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FOLLOWING KINSHASA 0051 SENT ACTION SECSTATE JAN 5; REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

S E C R E T KINSHASA 0051

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DEPT PASS LUSAKA FOR AMB WILKOWSKI

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CG, AO, US
SUBJ: ANGOLA: VISIT OF CONGRESSMAN BOWEN

1. SUMMARY: CONGRESSMAN DAVID BOWEN'S THREE DAY VISIT TO KINSHASA WAS FOR EXPRESSED PURPOSE OF GAINING MAXIMUM UNDERSTANDING OF ANGOLAN SITUATION PRIOR TO HOUSE DEBATE. WHILE HERE HE HAD TALKS WITH SAVIMBI, HOLDEN ROBERTO, BISENGIMANA (MOBUTU WAS OUT OF TOWN) AND FAZ PRESIDENTIAL SPECIAL STAFF DIRECTOR BABIA. HE ALSO TALKED WITH WOUNDED ANGOLAN SOLDIERS AT FNLA HOSPITAL. DURING TALKS-- ALL OF WHICH I ATTENDED-- BOWEN MADE POINT THAT TO GAIN US PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT THERE WAS NEED FOR MORE TANGIBLE EVIDENCE THAT (1) FNLA/UNITA ARE WORKING TOGETHER,
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KWL OTHER AFRICAN STATES DESIRE US ASSISTANCE TO COUNTER SOVIET/

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CUBAN INTERVENTION, AND (3) OTHER GOVERNMENTS (PARTICULARLY
EUROPEANS) ARE ALSO WILLING TO HELP FNLA/UNITA. SAVIMBI
AND ROBERTO EXPRESSED ANXIETY RE FUTURE US SUPPORT
AND NEED FOR SOUTH AFRICANS TO STAY IN. GOZ OFFICIALS
STRESSED THREAT SOVIET STRATEGY POSES FOR ZAIRE'S
OWN SECURITY. BOWEN INDICATED HIS INTENTION TO PLAY
ACTIVE ROLE IN SUPPORT OF ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION
WHEN CONGRESS RECONVENES. END SUMMARY.

2. AS USUALLY THE CASE, SAVIMBI MADE GOOD IMPRESSION AND
RESPONDED CANDIDLY TO BOWEN'S POINTED QUESTIONS. SAVIMBI
SAID WHILE IT WAS TRUE TENSION AND OCCASIONAL CONFLICT
CONTINUED BETWEEN UNITA AND FNLA FORCES IN ANGOLA,
COOPERATION AT THE HIGHER LEVELS WAS GOOD AND BOTH HE
AND HOLDEN WERE TRYING THEIR BEST TO ENSURE THIS
COOPERATION EXTENDED DOWN THE LINE. AT UNITA'S RECENT
PARTY CONGRESS ALL BUT A HANDFUL OF 30# PRESENT HAD VOWED TO
BURY HATCHET AND CONCENTRATE ALL EFFORTS AGAINST MPLA.
BOWEN STRESSED ANY REPORTS OF UNITA/FNLA DISCORD COULD
ONLY HURT THEIR CAUSE IN US. ON SOUTH AFRICAN QUESTION,
SAVIMBI SAID CONTINUED PRESENCE OF SAG FORCES WAS VITAL
TO COUNTER SOVIET/CUBAN INPUT. HE THOUGHT SENATE VOTE
AGAINST US ASSISTANCE HAD GREATLY DISCOURAGED SAG FROM
STAYING IN, ALTHOUGH IT WAS STILL NOT CLEAR WHETHER SAG
FORCES WOULD IN FACT BE WITHDRAWN BEFORE OAU SUMMIT
MEETING AS SAG REPS HAD INFORMED BOTH SAVIMBI AND ROBERTO.
SAVIMBI SAID UNITA COULD HOLD ITS OWN AFTER A SAG
WITHDRAWAL ONLY IF UNITA WERE PROVIDED WITH MORE AND
HEAVIER WEAPONS. IN RESPONSE TO BOWEN'S REMINDER
THAT CONGRESS WOULD NEVER AGREE TO INTRODUCTION OF
US PROSONNEL, SAVIMBI SAID FRENCH AND OTHER TRAINED EUROPEANS
COULD BE FOUND TO MAN SUCH WEAPONS. SAVIMBI SAID MATTER OF
SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES WAS TOO EXPLOSIVE TO PERMIT HIM
TO ADMIT THEY HELPING IN ANGOLA, EVEN THOUGH SUCH
ADMISSION MIGHT ENHANCE HIS CREDIBILITY IN FACE OF OAU
CRITICISM. AS FOR OAU RESULTS, SAVIMBI THOUGHT SPLIT AMONG
MEMBERS WOULD INDUCE NON-COMMITTED MAJORITY TO MOVE
TOWARD RECOGNIZING UNITA/FNLA GOVERNMENT; STRATEGY
WOULD THEN BE TO SEIZE LUANDA AND MALANJE PROVINCES AND
EVENTUALLY FORCE MPLA TO NEGOTIATE.
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3. HOLDEN ROBERTO: HOLDEN SAID HE HAD BEEN SHOCKED
BY SENATE VOTE, WHICH HAD HAD PROFOUNDLY NEGATIVE IMPACT
ON HIS CADRES AND ON OTHER AFRICANS CONCERNED BY COMMUNIST
INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA. HIS AFRICAN FRIENDS, HE SAID,
WERE BEGINNING TO SERIOUSLY QUESTION WHETHER THEY WOULD
NOT BE BETTER OFF WITH A RELIABLE SOVIET ALLY THAN AN
UNRELIABLE US. HE SAID THE SOUTH AFRICANS WERE ESSENTIAL

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TO RESIST THE SOVIETS' TANKS AND ROCKETS -- AND THAT
WITHOUT SAG HELP "ALL WILL BE LOST". ASKED ABOUT CHINESE
SUPPORT, HOLDEN SAID ONLY THE DAY BEFORE THE CHINESE
AMBASSADOR HAD CALLED ON HIM TO EXPLAIN WHY CHINA
COULD NOT ASSIST MATERIALLY ANY OF THE MOVEMENTS NOW
THAT ANGOLA WAS INDEPENDENT, BUT THAT CHINA WOULD CONTINUE
TO RENDER "POLITICAL AND MORAL SUPPORT" TO THE FNLA.
THE AMBASSADOR HAD ALSO SAID HE COULD NOT BELIEVE THE
US SENATE VOTE WAS "FINAL". DESPITE BOWEN'S ATTEMPTS
TO POINT OUT IRONY OF CHINESE POSITION, HOLDEN SEEMED
TO ACCEPT IT WITH UNDERSTANDING.

4. BISENGIMANA: IN MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU'S
SENIOR ADVISOR, BISENGIMANA, BOWEN EMPHASIZED
THAT THE CONGRESS WOULD BE MOST IMPRESSED BY A STATEMENT
BY AN AFRICAN LEADER, LIKE MOBUTU, CALLING FOR ADDITIONAL
US SUPPORT IN ANGOLA IN THE EVENT THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS
PERSISTED IN THEIR AID TO THE MPLA. BISENGIMANA TOOK
CAREFUL NOTE OF THIS SUGGESTION AND EXCHANGED IDEAS
WITH BOWEN ON HOW A RESOLUTION TO THIS EFFECT MIGHT
BE WORDED AT THE UPCOMING OAU MEETING. THEN BISENGIMANA
BRIEFED THE CONGRESSMAN AT LENGTH ON THE THREAT TO ZAIRE'S
SECURITY POSED BY SOVIET/CUBAN MOVES IN ANGOLA. HE
GAVE BOWEN A LARGE MAP OF ZAIRE WHICH DEPICTED HOW SOME OF
ZAIRE'S IMPORT/EXPORT ROUTES HAD ALREADY BEEN CUT (BENGUELA
RAILROAD), HOW THE MOZAMBIQUANS AND TANZANIANS HAD RECENTLY
CAUSED DIFFICULTIES OVER THE ROUTE OUT THROUGH
BEIRA AND KIGOMA/DAR ES SALAAM AND HOW EASY IT WOULD BE
FOR AN INIMICAL REGIME IN ANGOLA/CABINDA TO CUT OFF
MATADI.

5. GENERAL BABIA (FAZ"): FOLLOWING VISIT TO FNLA
HOSPITAL OUTSIDE KINSHASA WHERE BOWEN TALKED WITH NUMBER
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OF WOUNDED BACK FROM ANGOLAN FRONT, BOWEN MET WITH
GENERAL BABIA, DIRECTOR OF PRESIDENTIAL SPECIAL STAFF,
WHO -- FOLLOWING UP ON BISENGIMANA'S APPROACH -- GAVE
DETAILED ACCOUNT OF HOW PROVISION OF SOVIET ARMS TO
HOSTILE REGIMES IN NEIGHBORING TERRITORIES (ANGOLA,
CABINDA, CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE) POSED INCREASING THREAT
TO ZAIRE'S OWN SECURITY. FOLLOWING DISCUSSION OF WHAT
WEAPONS WERE MOST NEEDED IN BOTH ANGOLA AND ZAIRE, BABIA
PRESENTED "AIDE MEMOIRE" CONTAINING PITCH FOR MORE US
MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO STRENGTHEN ZAIRE'S DEFENSE
CAPABILITY (SEE SEPTEL.

6. COMMENT: CONGRESSMAN BOWEN SEEMED PLEASED WITH
CONTACTS AND DISCUSSIONS HERE, WHICH HE INTENDS TO UTILIZE TO
SUPPORT THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION DURING UPCOMING

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HOUSE DEBATE. BOTH ANGOLA AND ZAIRIAN OFFICIALS
WELCOMED CHANCE TO MAKE THEIR CASE DIRECTLY TO MEMBER
OF CONGRESS WHO SYMPATHETIC TO THEIR CAUSE. EMBASSY
BRIEFED BOWEN ON BACKGROUND AND CURRENT SITUATION IN
ANGOLA, AND HE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN FURTHER CONSULTATIONS
WITH DEPARTMENT FOLLOWING HIS RETURN JAN 18. BOWEN
CONFIRMED HE WOULD MAKE BRIEF STOP IN LUSAKA AND EXPRESSED
HOPE HE COULD SEE GOZ REPS IN ADDITION TO AMBASSADOR
WILKOWSKI. I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF THIS COULD
BE ARRANGED. CUTLER UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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